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C. A., the Knights of Columbus, and the Red Cross, the theaters, the visiting musical, theatrical, and lecture entertainments, all carry the impression of which I have spoken. The men have to work hard. They begin early in the morning and they continue through. Of course, they have hours of leisure, but one of these cantonments is no idle place for any one. It is a manual training school with long hours.

On the whole, therefore, I came away with a conviction that we had begun right. The draft law will win the war through American manhood, with its native courage, independence, and adaptability, instructed and trained in modern scientific warfare.

VOYAGING ON THE VOLGA AMID WAR AND REVOLUTION

War-time Sketches on Russia's Great Waterway

By William T. Ellis

NO TRAVELER fully knows Russia who has not sailed down the Volga River — "Little Mother Volga," as the people affectionately call it — the stream which unites the cold North with the glistening sands of the Caspian depression; which flows through Europe and ends in Asia; which runs from furs to cotton, and which links the Baltic with the Caspian. To journey down the Volga amid the ferment of war and revolution and economic upheaval is to have as good an opportunity as can anywhere be found for studying the composition and mind of this bewildered and bewildering nation.

Naturally, there is no tourist travel in Russia during the war, and an "Americanski" is a marked and favored man aboard the comfortable Volga steamers. Since it befell that duty called me from Petrograd and Moscow to the Caucasus, with an obligation to observe Russia by the way, I followed the circuitous and slower route, in the latter part of August, 1917, thus building up, little by little, day after day, impressions of the people that were clearer than those obtainable in the two chief cities.

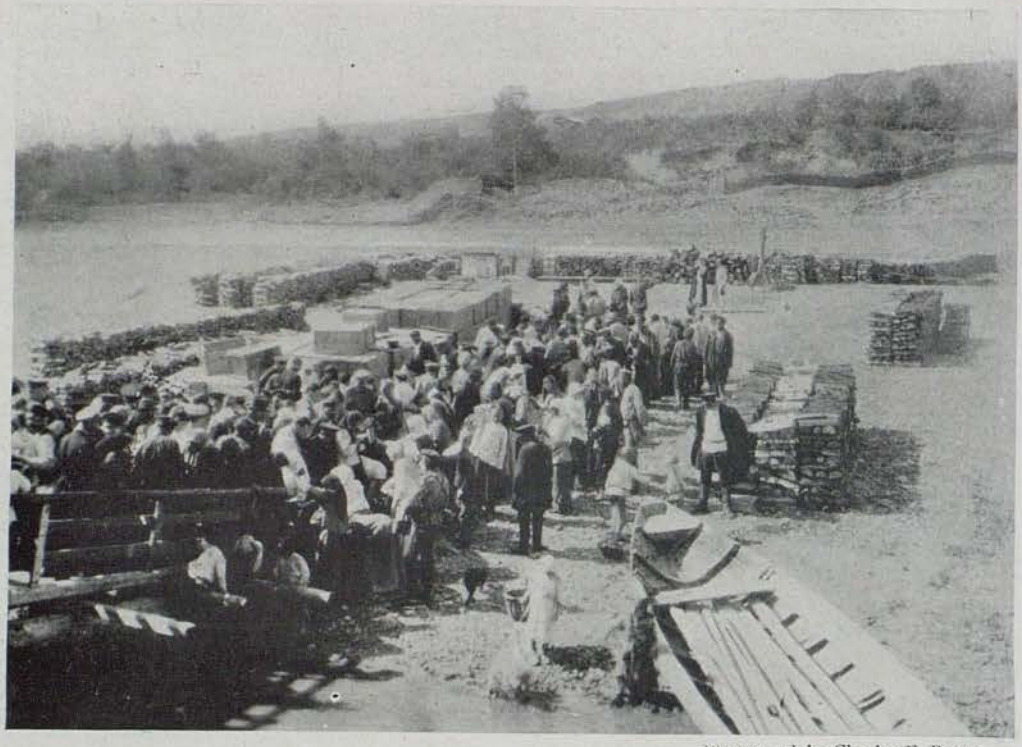
This Volga journey is so different from that across Siberia, which I have twice made, that one seems in another world — though both reveal imperial possibilities. These experiences spell in large letters the potentiality of the Russia that is yet to be.

THE STORY OF THE VOLGA

Largest of Europe's rivers, and ranking high among the great streams of the earth, the Volga follows a tortuous, leisurely course, through a watershed three times as large as France, for 2,305 miles, until it pours its waters, through a wide delta of many mouths, into the briny Caspian, the largest inland sea in the world. Its rise is far up in the north, not greatly distant from Petrograd, with which it is connected by canals and the River Neva, thus linking it to the Gulf of Finland.

A large motor-boat or a yacht could doubtless sail from America to the Baltic Sea, and so, through the Neva and connecting canals, down the Volga to the Caspian Sea and the shores of Turkestan, the Caucasus, and Persia. So far as I know, no adventurer has yet essayed this romantic trip, so rich in historical associations and in human interest.

The story of the Volga is the story of Russia. Slav, Tatar, Mongol, and German all have left their impress upon its banks, not to mention the score of minor nationalities and tribes who still fill the eye of the traveling American. Khan



Photograph by Charles E. Beury

A LANDING ALONG THE VOLGA

"The idea of Russia's plenty is visualized along the river. Upstream ships are laden within and without with great hampers of fruit. At some small ports there are literally thousands of watermelons on display. Much of the fresh produce must go to waste" (see text, page 264).

and Mogul, the Golden Horde and the armies of the Czars, have written their stories about this water. The tangled tale of Russia's people and history can best be understood when read in the leisurely comfort of one of the steamers on the Volga.

Everybody has heard of Nizhni Novgorod, famous chiefly for its cosmopolitan annual fair, the greatest in the world, and for the capital place the city has long occupied in the history of Russia. Under normal conditions, Nizhni is only a night's journey in a sleeping car from Moscow. It is the chief city on the Volga and the beginning of navigation for the larger steamers.

A DESERTED CITY

So it was at Nizhni that I began a wartime journey down the river, after a dreary day in the city of the great bazaar; for now the grass grows in the fair section of the Nizhni streets, and the rows upon rows of shops, to the number of about four thousand, are closed as tight as Philadelphia markets on Sunday.

The war has, for this year at least, put out of business the Nizhni Bazaar, to which for centuries merchants have been coming annually from out of the steppes of Tartary; from the villages of far Persia; from the hidden towns of Arabia, and from India, Japan, China, Turkey, and all the lands of Europe. This market-place has been unique in several particulars, one being that all the goods traded in were actually present on the spot. The annual volume of business is given by one authority as 250 million roubles.

Now, by those mysterious news currents which baffle understanding, the tidings had run to the remotest places of earth that there would be no Nizhni Ba-

Photograph by Charles E. Beury

OPEN MARKET AT ASTRAKHAN, ON THE VOLGA

"Russia is huge, and inchoate, and potential. Her people are at present adrift in their minds, as so many of them are adrift physically. They are in the grip of a great negation. Nevertheless, as surely as the turbid and tortuous Volga finds the shining sea, so surely will Russia one day emerge from her muddled and wavering drifting into the clear calm of a great and purposeful and brotherly national life" (see text, page 265).

zaar during 1917—though I was assured in Moscow that it was in full blast! No action to this effect was taken by any official body. Far from it. Nizhni, with the prosperity of its hundred thousand people at stake, hoped until the last. In two of the largest fair buildings, where pathetic trifles were sold to neighboring peasants, brass bands blared daily, in an effort to stimulate life and activity. As if by some occult agreement, the merchants simply failed to come. The shutters of the once busy bazaars, in the height of the historic fair season, were turned like blind eyes toward a world that gave no heed.

The Nizhni Fair of 1917 was one of war's casualties. Whether this archaic institution will ever again revive its ancient glories is a moot question. Will not trade turn to the great city centers of the world and to the conventional channels and usages of purchase and sale? The economic upheaval which has accompanied the world war may easily wipe out this picturesque survival of an ancient order, established at the confluence of the Oka and the Volga.

TRAFFIC ON A BUSY WATERWAY

Even though the Nizhni Fair should pass, the traffic of the Volga is certain to grow, with the reorganization of Russia's transportation system. There are riches of many kinds to be gleaned along the banks of this imperial river, and its waters are rich in fish which are the chief source of the world's supply of caviar. Lumber, hides, grain, wool, fruit, vegetables, and dairy products are among the commonest articles offered to the needs of the many by this productive region. Cotton, too, comes up from Persia in great barges, while the oil fields at

Baku send in large, low-lying tankers only a fraction of the amount of petroleum they are capable of supplying to the upper reaches of the Volga. River craft use no other fuel than oil.

One of the sights of the stream is the huge rafts of lumber, many of them more than 500 feet long, towed at an almost imperceptible rate of speed by side-wheel steamboats. The size of these rafts is indicated by the fact that the wash of the big Volga boats does not have any apparent effect upon them. So long is the Volga journey for the raftsmen that they build log houses on their rough craft, and even occasionally raise vegetables and flowers in miniature gardens. As these men sit gathered about their camp-fires, floating downstream, they afford one of the delightful night scenes of Volga travel. It is woodsmen's life afloat.

As scenery, the shores of the Volga cannot compare with those of many an American river. Along the upper reaches the right bank is hilly and pleasant, but lower down the stream enters the depression that once held the larger Caspian Sea, and here sand-dunes are common, with occasional stretches of real desert. These steppes are inhabited by Tatars, whose cattle come to the river bank to drink and whose camels give a touch of the ancient East to the landscape. Towns are not as numerous as might be expected along so famous a river, although some of the cities have occupied an important place in Russian history.

THE BOLSHIVIK IDEA OF FREEDOM

Recently half a dozen of the Volga cities have made more than a little trouble for the central government by declaring themselves independent republics and so continuing for a few days. What does liberty mean, reason these simple-minded folk, if not the right to do as one pleases? In Nizhni the soldiers rose against their officers and slew many, so that a force had to be sent against them from Moscow. As there was no capital punishment in existence at the time, the insurgents were simply distributed among other military units.

Overshadowing every mile and minute of the Volga journey is the fact of the war and the revolution. It is the topic of private conversation and of public discourse. "Swaboda," or "freedom," soon becomes a familiar sound, even to alien ears. No boat is without its soldier passengers, traveling, apparently, on individual initiative.

Immediately after the revolution, when all sorts of radical conceptions of liberty were abroad in the land, groups of wandering soldiers would take complete control of ships, driving first-class passengers from their state-rooms, on the argument, which I have since heard frequently advanced, in somewhat similar conditions, that the revolution overthrew the rich, and that now the poor should have the best. If the bottom does not come to the top and the top go to the bottom, wherein is the revolution? In one case the soldiers decided, after traveling a day, that they wanted to return to the port of embarkation, so they compelled the captain to turn the ship about and retrace that day's journey!

RAW MATERIAL FOR A MATCHLESS ARMY

That these big blond fellows, in grayish-brown fustian and khaki, could do anything lawless or really vicious seems hard to believe. They are like overgrown, good-natured country boys. They lie about the decks, sleeping most of the time, and as inoffensive as so many St. Bernard puppies. Their capacity for endurance seems limitless. They ask no bed but a board, and can curl up into the smallest space imaginable. For food they have nothing but the soggy black bread, which plays so great havoc with the digestion of foreigners; and often even that is not in evidence. Yet I have seen a group of these hungry soldiers travel for two days alongside great hampers of fruit and never touch a plum.

It is unthinkable that the lawless youngster which is dormant in every American soldier would not have possessed within an hour this unguarded provender. Thoughts of American militiamen clamoring for Pullmans are bound to recur to the traveling Yankee, as he sees the way in which Russian soldiers are herded on cold decks or, worse, in triple tiers of wooden bunks in box-cars.

Everywhere that one goes in Russia

Photograph by William T. Ellis

A VOLGA STEVEDORE

"They heartily bend their backs to unbelievable burdens. Often I have watched processions of them going up steep gang-planks, each man bearing a packing case—a full-sized, full-weight packing case, such as two draymen in America move only by turning from side to side" (see text, page 261).

one sees soldiers. It is estimated that there are 15,000,000 men under arms here, though most of them are by no means at the front. The unorganized way in which they drift about the land is an endless source of wonder. Seldom are they seen by companies or regiments. Only once, and that was in the big training camp outside of Moscow, have I chanced to see soldiers drilling. It is commonly said that the purpose of the old régime in raising so large an army was to create industrial and economic chaos, with consequent disturbances, which would permit Russia, according to the treaties, to make a separate peace.

THE SEDUCTIVE INFLUENCE OF FREE TRANSPORTATION

Whatever was the mind of the old bureaucracy, it has wrought something like a paralysis of industry among the Russian peasants, who, while the women work, are enjoying respite from toil and the pleasures of roving from place to place, with free transportation provided.

Evil propagandists, "exiles" returned from America and from Germany, have greatly demoralized the army. No more fertile field for leadership, either good or bad, can be found in all the world than the Russian soldiers. Of late, however, the leadership has been mistaken. Given a clear vision of duty, these simple, trustful men will do it to the uttermost.

Partings of wives from soldiers are a sad spectacle, witnessed at almost every port of call. There are not many words, and usually only the silent sobbing of the women, until the boat starts, and then there may be a violent outburst that is heartrending to the listener. Much is said of the moral laxity of the Russian people and of the lightness of the marriage tie, but the story of true domestic affection is revealed in too many of these

Photograph by Gilbert Grosvenor

BEGGAR AT NIZHNI NOVGOROD

Russia has many beggars. But even among them one sees, in spite of their rags, faces that proclaim good hearts and genial souls. Better a beggar without even a crust of black bread than the well-fed barterer of his country's weal!

scenes of separation for the observer to accept entirely such cynical generalizations.

Often they have their lighter side. At one wharf it was the wife and son who were leaving the soldier husband and father. Into the midst of the parting came a procession of stevedores, bearing great sacks of sunflower seeds, a common Russian delicacy. One man's burden struck a snag, there was a rent in the burlap, and forth poured a flood of the black and white seeds. Instantly the soldier's cap was off and he was holding it under this stream of unexpected bounty. What spilled to the ground other soldiers and small boys gathered, heedless, as they cracked the seeds skillfully in their teeth, of either dirt or germs. Thus the strain of one separation was relieved, for the wife, aboard the boat, was glad to see her husband's larder enriched.

WIVES TRAVEL WITH SOLDIER HUSBANDS

Occasionally, as in Mexico, the wives accompany their soldier husbands, their household effects wrapped in bundles and a baby or two on their arms or clinging to the mother's skirt.

Only one glimpse did I have on the Volga trip of the women soldiers, of whom I had seen many in Petrograd and Moscow. This was at Saratov, where a company of women soldiers were marching through the streets, led by a man officer. A moment before a company of male soldiers had passed, singing lustily the unforgettable Russian marching songs, which are their military music; but these women moved in grim silence, with set faces.

All of them were young—the youth of the Russian women soldiers is the first characteristic that one notices—but their cheeks were bronzed and their uniforms, which are the same as those of the men, were old. Many of them did not have puttees, and their footwear was varied, canvas shoes predominating. All of them wore their hair short. Clearly, for this particular group, the stage of novelty and enthusiasm had passed and had been succeeded by sheer resolution. Most of the glamour of soldiering had disappeared.

They marched in good formation, but

Photograph by Gilbert Grosvenor

CAB DRIVER AT NIZHNI NOVGOROD

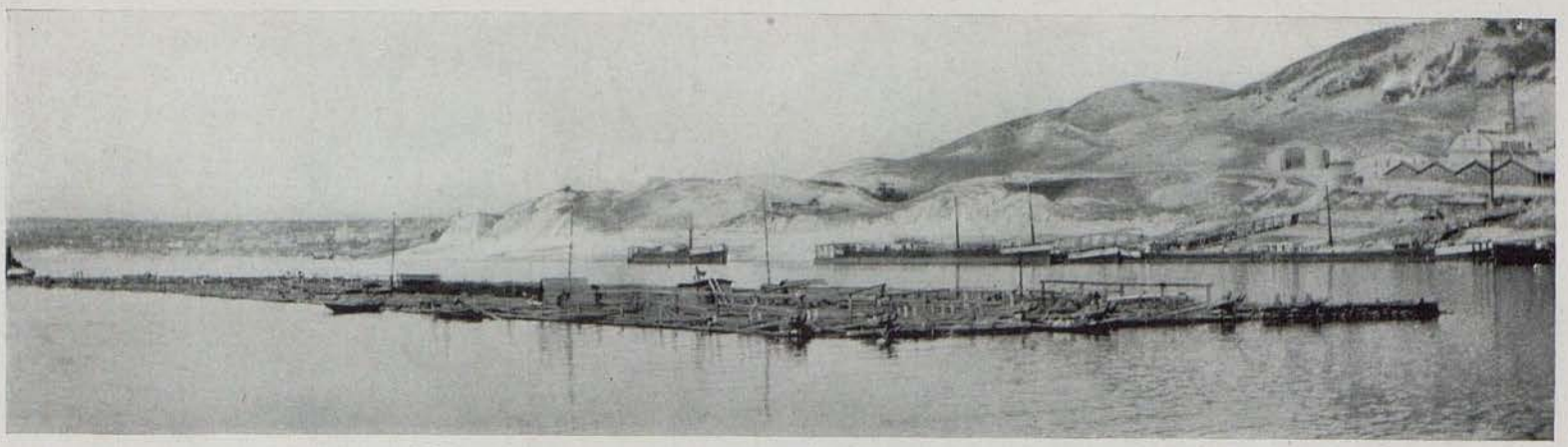
The great fair city, where once the buyers of the world journeyed for barter and trade, is now almost as much a deserted place during the fair season as once it was in the northern mid-winter. Like Russia's martial spirit, it lies dead—perhaps beyond the hope of resurrection!

with more of doggedness than abandon or sprightliness.

All of these women soldiers belong to the everywhere popular "battalions of death," who are pledged not to retreat or surrender. Their effect upon the men soldiers has been twofold: some regard them as inspired saviors of the country, a sort of Joans of Arc; while others are inclined to jeer and make scurrilous remarks. In no instances, though, have the men given evidence that they regard the formation of women's battalions as a reflection upon themselves.

SPRING BEDS UNKNOWN TO THE MOUJIK

But, then, these private soldiers, over whose sleeping forms I have often stumbled on the dark decks and in unexpected corners of docks and highways and sta-



VOLGA RAFTS ARE HUGE

Sweeping down through eastern European Russia from a point southeast of Petrograd, first east to the great bend at Kazan and then south past Samara and Saratof to Astrakhan, the Volga, unparalleled by a railroad, and only occasionally crossed by one, is a great artery of trade up which move the products of Trans-Caucasia and Turkestan, and down which comes the commerce of northeastern Europe bound for southeastern Asia.

A TYPICAL VOLGA TOWN

Photographs by William T. Ellis

In times gone by many of the cities of the Volga region were wealthy and prosperous, taking toll from a rich river trade. Now they are all but starving. It is dishonorable now in Russia to be provident, and unpatriotic to advocate the keeping of international covenants, and prosperity can never dwell in any country that entertains such sentiments.

tions, are not a keenly sensitive lot. They are used to a rough life; hardships are no new experience for them. When I would commiserate them for sleeping on iron decks or on wooden shelves or on the ground, I recall that they have never known spring mattresses. The black bread that makes ill those unaccustomed to it has always been their usual fare. A care-free, singing, sleeping—especially sleeping—lot of boys on a holiday they are, lacking the ebullient spirits of youth.

Only the manual laborer can understand their enjoyment of respite from toil. Most of these men, whom our boat so casually takes on or gives up at ports on the way, had never, before the war, been 25 versts from the villages in which they were born. Now they are tasting the irresponsibility of the open road, adventuring into far places and new scenes, learning as they go all sorts of new facts and theories about life. By way of its soldiers the whole of Russia has suddenly been put through a course in cosmopolitanism. These men are of themselves unenterprising and strangely lacking in initiative. They are not trouble-makers; a more inoffensive crowd of patient and long-enduring men may scarcely be imagined. Perhaps the simplest explanation of the absorbing phenomena of the Russian soldiers is to say that they are at present merely raw material—men in the making, but for the moment only children. They are sorely befuddled by the lack of leaders and slogans and standards; therefore they are drifting aimlessly about the land — unorganized, undisciplined, undirected, and ready to follow the mad radicalism of the first "boulshevik," or extreme socialist, who gets their ear—and the Maximalists have shown an efficiency in propaganda that has been their one achievement in revolutionized Russia.

WHAT LEADERSHIP COULD ACCOMPLISH IN RUSSIA

If, instead of the radicals, the real patriots and democrats of Russia were instructing and inspiring the soldiers, so that the troops would have a comprehensible battle cry and a simple objective, there would be no withstanding these physically virile fellows.

Quite different were the group of soldiers who came aboard our boat at Kazan. Such as had uniforms seemed to be wearing those of the Austrian army, as we had come to know it from observation of German and Austrian prisoners in many towns and cities of Russia. These men, 30 in number, were singularly alert and well kept, their uniforms, or semi-uniforms, being in an admirable condition of spruceness. Each man wore a red and white ribbon somewhere on his coat, and we speedily learned that they were Czechs, or Bohemians, who had been conscripted into the Austrian army, and at the first opportunity, during the battle of Lemberg, two years before, had voluntarily surrendered to the Russians.

After the revolution the request of these Czechs to fight on the side of liberty had been partly acceded to. At the recent debacle on the Galician front these Czechs had behaved so valiantly that Kerensky had given them permission to form a separate Czech unit, and our fellow-passengers were on the way, via Samara and Kiev, to join their compatriots on the eastern front.

When asked what would befall if they should be captured by the Austrians, they cheerfully and graphically explained that they would be hanged; but that it was an unwritten agreement among them that before falling into the hands of the nation from whose power the Czechs seek liberation they would do as other Czechs had done at the time of the eastern retreat—shoot themselves.

THE CZECHS DESERT TO LIBERTY'S ARMIES

The ardor and intelligence and patriotism of these men, going smilingly to death for the old cause of self-government, was refreshing. When we proposed photographing them, they asked that it be beside their red and white flag, which flew from the steamer's top deck. This standard bore the words, "Czech Volunteers. Forward for Liberty!"

Every man of the thirty has relatives among the two million Czechs, or Bohemians, who have emigrated to America, most of them being found in Pennsylvania and in Chicago. There are eight million left behind, and these, we were told, are a unit in desiring independence.

Photograph by Gilbert Grosvenor

TWENTY-FIVE MEDALS DECORATING A POLICEMAN AT NIZHNI NOVGOROD

In the old days decorations were widely bestowed in Russia. Almost every supporter of the dynasty could wear one or more of them. But now who wears a badge is bourgeois and anybody who has anything is anathema. "Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

We saw our Czech friends later, marching in fine formation through Samarra, to the music of their own weird, staccato song, going gaily forward, buoyed up by the greatest of purposes, to the line of battle. They broke their discipline long enough to salute and then cheer their American friends—one more of the countless moving tokens of the kinship which all the freedom-loving people of earth have with the great Republic of the West.

To be an American, anywhere among the allied nations at the present time, is to be the recipient of uncounted marks of consideration. The two "American-skis" on the Volga boat were especially favored in every way, and telegrams evidently preceded them at all points of change or debarkation; so that, amid all

the riot and clamor of a congested traffic, with the impossibility of providing accommodation for those desiring it, the Americans were cared for at every step of the journey.

RUSSIANS LIKE THE "AMERICANSKI"

Officials of the boats, army officers, and private citizens vied with one another to show courtesy to the Americans. While Russia is full of stories of the malicious efforts of the returned radicals from America—some of them unquestionably paid pro-German agents — to foment a feeling against the United States, and to attribute all sorts of sinister motives to our efforts to serve Russia, the experience of an American who has already traveled 8,000 miles in Russia is that the eyes of even the peasant and the soldier light up with new interest and friendliness at the word "Americanski" or at the sight of the little button flag on the coat lapel.

Photograph by William T. Ellis

ARMENIAN CHILDREN OF THE VOLGA REGION

Until the hand of history ceases to write down the chronicles of man and its records are forgotten, the world will never look into an Armenian face, be it that of youth or age, without recalling with a shudder the tortures these people have endured at the hands of the Turk. Their poverty is bad, their lack of human liberty is worse; but their bitter persecution ranks with the cruelties of the darkest ages and the most despicable tyrants of history.

When we were introduced aboard the boat to Kerensky's assistant minister of war, en route to inspect the great munition plants at one of the Volga cities, the general straightway gave us an autograph letter to the commander in the Caucasus, ordering that all things be placed at our disposal, clear down to the front line of fighting, simply because we are Americans.

As the clear waters of the Kama, itself an imperial river, flow into the turbid Volga, keeping distinct for a time, like the waters of the Yellow Sea and the Pacific, but ultimately blending, so the Volga River basin represents the great blend of the diverse races that go to make up this marvelous Russia.

A POTPOURRI OF RACES

The distinct types are ever clearly before one, and also the amalgamation of the Slav and the Teuton and the Tatar

Photograph by William T. Ellis

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS ON A VOLGA BOAT: EVENING

Creature comforts are almost as unnecessary to the Russian peasant as are sheer luxuries to the people of the western world. He never slept in a bed with springs in his life, a bath-tub is all but an unknown quantity to him. Give him a pillow for his head, black bread and soup for his stomach, and simple clothes for his body, and he has fewer worries than the ox that grazes in the pasture.

Photograph by Charles E. Beury

WAKING HOURS ON A VOLGA RIVER STEAMER

"The story of the Volga is the story of Russia. Slav, Tatar, Mongol, and German, all have left their impress upon its banks. Khan and Mogul, the Golden Horde and the armies of the Czars, have written their stories about this water. The tangled tale of Russia's people and history can best be understood when read in the leisurely comfort of one of the steamers on the Volga" (see text, page 245).

and the Semite. It is not easy to tell which of one's fellow-passengers are predominantly Slav and which are Mongol; Persian and Armenian sit side by side at the table, and until pork is served the American cannot tell them apart. So do costumes blend. Yonder Chinese (or is he a Mongol?) wears a wholly Russian costume, and our tall Cossack may be either a Georgian or a Circassian, though he looks like an Armenian.

As with the blood and costumes, so also is it with customs. Below us, on the forward deck, sits a family drinking tea from bowls, which they hold in uttermost Chinese fashion, rather than from glasses, in the Russian mode; yet one of the women wears a wrist watch and all are dressed as Slavic peasants. Alongside of them sits a woman who is combing her own hair, for various little reasons, while another is performing the same office for her neighbor, in the friendly fashion of India and of all oriental mothers.

The hair is a point of pride with both men and women in this country. Not only aboard ship, but even in the best restaurants, I have seen men publicly combing both beard and hair; frequently I have observed it among men at table. Even in the midst of the church service an occasional Russian priest will comb his flowing beard and locks; and I saw bishops and archbishops, in the anteroom of the procurator of the Holy Synod, make a complete toilet with huge combs which they carry hidden somewhere in their robes.

EXAMPLES OF HIRSUTE EFFULGENCE

On the other hand, there are apparent Nazarites who give no heed to their wild, unshorn locks. For example, there was the young chap whom we dubbed Horace Greeley, with his soft, straggling beard and a quizzical look behind his ill-fitting, silver-rimmed glasses, as if he were ever in the glare of the sun. His straw hat was fastened by a string, and he carried a carpet-sack, from which he was continually drawing forth food, so that his time was divided, like that of most Russians, between smoking and eating.

Many peasants and soldiers pay no other attention to hair, apparently, than to cut it off square before it reaches the shoulders. For hirsute effulgence, however, commend me to the genial izhvostiks, or drosky-drivers, of Nizhni Novgorod; their whiskers are as ample as their coats, which, as all who have seen Russian Jehus know, is superlative speech.

The greatest blend of Volga River travel is found among the fourth-class passengers. First-class cabins, high-ceiled and spacious, with no upper berths, are forward on the upper deck, with plate-glass windows in dining-room and music-room. Second-class passengers are aft on the same deck, with cabins and their own dining-room, the overflow sleeping in the dining-room. There is no distinction on deck between the two classes, and even the third and fourth classes, in addition to the soldiers, promenade the upper deck, in a merging consequent upon the revolution.

SCENES WITHOUT PARALLEL IN THE WESTERN WORLD

The third-class passengers have bunks, two tiers high (I have even seen men sleeping on the narrow luggage shelves above the bunks), while the fourth class simply camp down amid their luggage on the deck—forward, aft, along the rails, or wherever else they can find a foothold. The footway alongside the oil-using engines is lined at night with sleepers—men, women, and children—with faces screwed up beneath the glare of the electric light.

This is a scene with no parallel in the western world. Slavs, Mongols, Jews, Persians, Tatars, Circassians, Armenians, and gypsies all herd together in what appears to be a conglomerate and inextricable mass of misery. Each family or group is perched on or beside its bundles—bundles of cloth or of oriental rugs, some of them beautiful—and its baskets. Occasionally there will be seen an imitation leather gripsack or a gaily-colored tin trunk.

As most of these people are traveling with their household goods, it is easy to see what a family prizes. This one has a battered dressmaker's form. Yonder one iron dumb-bell, weighing 15 pounds or so, which a woman carefully treasures.

A VOLGA STEAMER

"As the clear waters of the Kama, itself an imperial river, flow into the turbid Volga, keeping distinct for a time, like the waters of the Yellow Sea and the Pacific, but ultimately blending, so the Volga River basin represents the great blend of the diverse races that go to make up this marvelous Russia" (see text, page 255).

Photographs by William T. Ellis

LANDING GRAIN FROM A VOLGA BOAT

Germany's scheme in the East is to open up the wheat fields of southern Russia by the separate peace route and move foodstuffs up the Danube into the heart of the Teutonic Alliance. Therefore, every ounce of butter, every pound of flour, every piece of meat, you save for the Allies is America's answer to Teutonic designs.

Photograph by William T. Ellis

LOOKING DOWN ON DECK PASSENGERS

It's a motley medley of human freight you see on the river boat of Russia in 1918. These steamers are packed and crowded and jammed. White Russians, Red Russians, Little Russians, Kirghiz, Turkomen, Gypsies—a great medley of humanity, few seeming to feel or care that the world is on fire and western civilization in the balance, so long as they can rest from the burdens of the time.

Musical instruments are common, and a huge gramaphone horn is not infrequent. A child's toy sometimes has a pathetic first place. Sewing-machines are not rare. But mostly the array is bundles, huge and shapeless. Frequently baskets of fowls are carried. One sunny morning I made count of what I saw on the iron main deck, aft, in a space 25 by 45 feet.

SUCKLING PIGS AND SICKLY CHICKENS TRAVEL WITH THE FAMILY

There were 60 persons in all visible, besides luggage. Fifteen of them were asleep and 45 were awake. Most of the passengers were women; some of the groups had not a man among them. But, then, the Russian peasant woman asks no odds of man in any test of strength, intelligence, or capability. Two of the women below, as I watched, were coddling sickly chickens in their arms, the fowls evidently having been victims of the congestion in the baskets. Another woman was airing a suckling pig on her knee. Two women were knitting socks and two were making the toilets of children.

One woman was counting her money and wrapping it up in a rag—the dirty paper currency, which, in denominations of 30, 25, 20, 15, and 10 kopecks, is in the form of postage stamps, while the one, two, three, and five kopeck notes are larger, the 50-kopeck note being larger still. There is no clink of currency in Russia now. Metal currency has disappeared, save for some coppers down in the Caspian region. An American gold piece is worth five times its ante-war value; and in the bazaars, owing to the many-fold depreciation of the rouble, one may secure incredible bargains by the display of a gold coin—which is no little comfort, after the staggering war prices that are one's daily experience.

To return to the deck scene: Half a dozen of the women are eating and drinking, while one woman is selling scrubby apples, which customers cut into bits and put into their tea—almost anything edi-

Photograph by William T. Ellis

SOMETHING TO EAT AT A RIVER PORT

"That these big blond fellows in grayish-brown fustian and khaki could do anything lawless or really vicious is hard to believe. They are like overgrown, good-natured country boys. For food they have nothing but the soggy black bread which plays so great havoc with the digestion of foreigners; and often even that is not in evidence. Yet I have seen a group of these hungry soldiers travel for two days alongside great hampers of fruit and never touch a plum" (see text, page 248).

ble being an acceptable addition to the ubiquitous glass of tea. Four men are playing cards for money, while an eager company of spectators throng about them. Others are talking, smoking, eating, or scratching. Nobody seems unhappy, despite the huddled mass they all compose.

HANDS AND FACES GO UNWASHED

In this same space, occupying a fair half of it, we had earlier carried a company of dirty, ragged gypsies, who went ashore gypsy fashion, the man carrying the baby, and the woman carrying the tent-poles. I had noticed the man sewing on his corduroy trousers, while his wife stitched the tent. These people, with their black-eyed elves of youngsters, had contrived to improvise a tent on the deck; so they had a measure of privacy, though there was evidence that it was not privacy, but protection for their heaps of nondescript bundles, that they desired. The gypsies were troubled even less than the other passengers by the lack of opportunity to wash their faces.

Perhaps a woman could have told how these deck passengers were dressed; it baffled me, for the raiment of the women seemed to be a general wrapping up. The distinctive and attractive costumes are worn by the men.

In one particular the peasant women of Russia and most of the East really have an advantage over their Western sisters: they and their husbands are freed from the tyranny of the milliner, for they wear nothing more than a kerchief or a shawl about their heads. Often these are the soft and beautiful Persian and Cashmere weaves; and I have seen on the heads of peasant women shawls richer by far in texture and color than any creation of a Fifth Avenue milliner. Their blend of harmonious hues and graceful designs is

so beautiful that the traveler covets them every one.

FORMIDABLE HEADGEAR

Even the elaborate headdress of the men is never so delightful as the best of the shawls worn by the women; but it is more striking, especially as the traveler draws near to Persia and the Caucasus. Huge lamb-skin shakos, of all shapes and no shape, are the accepted headgear even for August. I have seen them two feet high and almost as wide.

To counteract the warmth, or for other reasons, the Moslem keeps his head shaved; and the appearance of a man with a heavy black beard and no hair above his ears is at least unfamiliar to Americans. At every landing one catches new suggestions for comic costumes for stage use.

We carried from Astrakhan to Petrovsk a Persian whose lamb-skin hat, never seen off his head, at meals or at night, was no blacker than his villainous beard, which did not conceal the fact that his chin was only an inward slope, and that his teeth lapped fondly over each other. His eyes roved perpetually, in different directions, and he was ever on the grin. His coat was a long, gray one, with spreading skirt, and his shoes were picturesque green.

He was no more picturesque than the long-haired "anarchist"—who may have been merely a genius from New York, visiting his native Russia!—wearing what appeared to be a suit of pajamas, braided with black cord and frogs, and a black Windsor tie. He did not, however, as do many Russian men, wear a bracelet. At least he looked cool, whereas not a few of his fellow-passengers wore furs, making no change of costume the year around.

WHERE BATHING SUITS ARE UNAPPRECIATED

Nobody here sees any incongruity in persons clad in heavy furs and woolens looking over the rail at the natives—men, women, and children—bathing unclad. I have seen many bathers in various parts of Russia, but I have yet to see the first inch of a bathing suit. Even at Petrograd I passed a woman bathing in the Neva within a hundred yards of passing tram-cars.

This leisurely travel gives occasion for philosophising upon many of the vanities of life. Thus, I have observed a greater number of handsome men at Volga landings than appear on all the moving-picture screens of America. Most of them were hamals, or coolies, or, as we would say, stevedores, dressed in rags, with a cumbersome pack-saddle on their backs, upon which they commonly bear loads of two and three hundred pounds. Unlimited material for matinee idols—Persians with regular features, black moustaches, and large, languishing eyes—is living its life of merry jest and cheer along the Volga, carrying burdens which two men would not essay on the docks of San Francisco or Philadelphia.

They have never heard that "Beauty is its own excuse for being," so they heartily bend their backs to unbelievable burdens. Often I have watched processions of them going up steep gang-planks, each man bearing on his back a packing case—a full-sized, full-weight, packing case, such as two draymen in America move only by turning from side to side. Nothing is carried except on the back. I saw a large drop-forge being borne ashore a few days ago, and while three other men were steadying it, the weight of the machine, which could not have been less than 500 pounds, came on one man's back. These professional burden-bearers of the Near East, Kurds and Persians and Armenians, carry heavier loads than even the Korean coolies or the hill-women of the Himalayas.

SONGS AND HORSE-PLAY LIGHTEN THE TOILING HOURS

As they toil they sing. Quips and jests and horse-play are common with these human drays as they race with one another up and down gang-planks. Songs of the Volga toilers are known everywhere, but I never heard them so well done as one night at a port where a square box, evidently containing a stone of many hundred-weight, was to be dragged aboard. It was placed on a long plank, as if to increase the friction, and this was drawn by ten men, pulling upon one rope. An extra stone, weighing two or

three hundred pounds, was carried on top of the box, as a mere unconsidered trifle.

At home, of course, rollers would have been put under the plank and the whole moved forward easily; but labor-saving devices have yet to find their way into this land, where man-power is the cheapest of commodities. As the team of ten men strained at the rope, they sang. Their leader, or cantor, was a long-whiskered patriarch who would have made a model precentor for a Presbyterian church—provided he left his dinky little round hat in Russia. He carried the solo parts of the chantey, and the chorus came crashing in with deep responses, richer by far than anything heard on the Potomac or the Mississippi. The performance would have gladdened a musician's heart, who straightway would have transcribed its melody. How the hardest toilers sing, the world around!

The Russian love of music appears in many forms. Frequently at ports of call we would be serenaded for alms by a crippled soldier and his family or by a group of maimed comrades. The man would play the accordeon—the piano of the peasant—and his companions would sing, and sing effectively, as apparently all Russians do.

SING, EVEN THOUGH YOU SUFFER

There is a strain of plaintiveness in these folk-melodies, even as in their church services, where the unaccompanied choirs make music that is famous for depth and richness. These long nights on the river, with an accordeon or the Russian triangular guitar usually within sound, gave one a fondness for the strains of this simple music. After all, it is a fine philosophy that these cripples and peasants teach: Keep your music portable; and if you suffer, at least sing. To rafts and docks and shores and passing craft, as well as from the fellow-passengers crowded on the deck below, I owe a remembered debt for Volga music.

Occasional landings break the monotony of the voyage down the river. Between Nizhni Novgorod and Astrakhan, the two terminal points of the steamers, there are several cities of historic and commercial importance—Kazan, Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov, Tzaritzuin. Passengers have time to go ashore for sightseeing and for shopping, although the latter, nowadays, has to do strictly with the food supply.

From the American's viewpoint, Saratov is the best city of the group, although many an American town of one-fourth its size is better built and kept. These lower Volga cities show the predominance of the Germans, who were settled there by Catherine the Great and who lately have been more than a little inconvenienced by their German sympathies.

This element accounts for the presence of conventional western church spires in these cities and towns, for the settlers have remained Lutherans. Roman Catholic churches are more numerous, also, in this section. Even along the lower Volga the Greek churches and cathedrals, some of them very old, since this is not new country, dominate the landscape. Frequently the great church, with its domes and campanile, will be the one pretentious structure in a community. The vogue of the campanile, some examples of which, like the churches to which they are attached, are really beautiful, is sure to be remarked by the Volga traveler.

APPROACHING THE HABITAT OF THE MINARET

Not until he comes to a few picturesque Tatar mosques, as the boat nears Astrakhan, does the minaret appear; and even in the surprising and motley city of Astrakhan the mosques are few and humble and their minarets resemble the steeples of small country churches at home. One who has traveled much in the Near East, and is accustomed to the subordination of the church to the mosque, takes a rather unchristian satisfaction in the spectacle of an oriental region where the church buildings dominate the landscape.

That this is the East, one's ears make clear at every port. The noise is the babel of human voices; not the rumble of machinery or of motor-cars or of railways, but the shrill shoutings of the Orient, which does nothing without clamor. Quarrels are almost entirely verbal. I have not seen one stand-up and knock-down fight in all the turbulent experiences of travel in Russia; the nearest to it was

when two cabbies, or izhvostiks, clutched each other's big padded coat and pushed and pulled while they cursed.

The Russians really are a peaceable people, of a surpassing kindliness. In some of the worst jams aboard the boat I have heard the women use language such as on the battle front is transmuted into bullets; but of the good nature which usually prevails amid congested travel conditions, one cannot speak too highly.

FOOD THE PRINCIPAL OCCASION OF EXCITEMENT

Most of the excitement at ports of call has to do with food. This phase of the Volga voyage, or of life in Russia itself, deserves a chapter apart. The meal hours on the big passenger steamers were simply incomprehensible. Of course, "chai," or tea, was served, or made, in one's cabin or in the dining-room, at the time of arising, which might be anywhere from 9 to 12 o'clock. Nothing is served in the dining-room or from the kitchen and pantry between the hours of 12 and 2 o'clock at mid-day or between 6 and 8 o'clock in the evening! This is the rest-time of the servants.

Since the revolution all sorts of radical changes have come about in the lot of waiters, cooks, chambermaids, and other domestics. For one thing the fee system has been abolished, except in the case of hotel porters. Fifteen or 20 per cent is added to one's bill for "service."

Reforms in the hours of labor have also taken place; so that, for example, in Astrakhan it was impossible to secure a morsel of luncheon before 1 o'clock at the city's one leading restaurant. The night before it had been 8 o'clock before the Arcadia restaurant opened, though the hungry Americans got something to eat an hour earlier by being admitted to the city's leading gaming club, which had a buffet attached. On the boat, as I have indicated, there was strictly no business done in the culinary department within the hours when all Americans are accustomed to their meals.

As it worked out in practice, one's order for luncheon was taken at 2 o'clock and he was lucky if he got something to eat by 3. Commonly, we sat down to dinner in the evening at 10 o'clock. If it were not for individual stores of food and tea-making outfits, there would be real suffering, since the distance between tea and bread upon arising and luncheon at 3 is of Marathon magnitude to a hungry American.

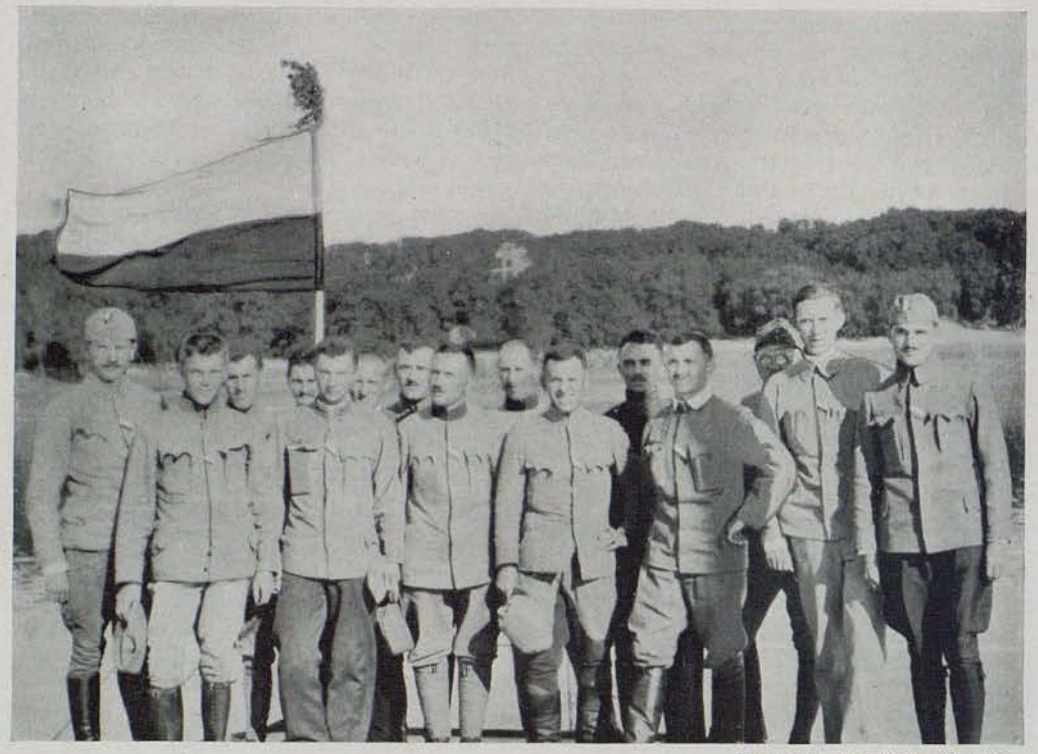
Contrariwise—and Russia is a land of contraries—the very next steamer we took, from Astrakhan to Baku, on the Caspian, served meals promptly at western hours—"little breakfast" at 8, luncheon at 12, and dinner at 6. So the eating habits of Russians may not safely be generalized upon, except that they eat with frequency and with disregard of standardized usages.

FORAGING AS A FINE ART

War's gentle art of foraging is no new acquisition for Russia. All travel is based on the assumption that most of the passengers will carry food with them or secure it en route. It is the rare person who depends entirely upon the dining-car or the ship's restaurant.

It is perfectly *au fait* for a gentleman, and even for a military officer, to enter the dining-room with a box of caviar, or a loaf of whitish bread and a couple of cucumbers, or a jar of jam in his hands. It may be that he carries dried fish by their tails or a watermelon under his arm. It is to secure these supplies that passengers rush ashore at every stop. Most have come from the sad and soggy black bread of Petrograd and Moscow; and before they are far down the Volga they find themselves in the realm of plentiful white bread, or near-white bread, and even, in some places, of real pastry.

There is abundance of grain in some of these towns, but the local committees will not permit it to be shipped out—another illustration of the everywhere-apparent fact that Russia's fundamental need is organization and transportation. The traveler has scarcely come out from under the depression of the bread lines of the North, and the nightmare of black bread, when suddenly, at Astrakhan, he finds himself once more in the black-bread-line zone. Of dairy products and fruits—milk, butter, cheese, eggs, melons, potatoes, onions, egg-plants, tomatoes,



Photograph by William T. Ellis

SOME OF OUR CZECH FELLOW-PASSENGERS ON THE VOLGA

"These men were singularly alert and well kept, their uniforms, or semi-uniforms, being in an admirable condition of spruceness. Each man wore a red and white ribbon. They were Czechs, or Bohemians, who had been conscripted into the Austrian army, and at the first opportunity, during the battle of Lemberg, two years before, had voluntarily surrendered to the Russians. After the revolution the request of these Czechs to fight on the side of liberty had been partly acceded to" (see text, page 253).

beans, apples, peaches, pears, plums, and luscious grapes—there is no stint in Astrakhan; but bread and sugar are procurable only by ticket.

Many river ports have food in plenty and the peasant women bring it down to the wharves. During the time the steamer is at the dock the scene is a busy one, passengers milling about, like cattle in a corral, as they pass from vendor to vendor, seeking bargains. This frequent exodus to the shore of shoppers for food is the most absorbing spectacle of the Volga River journey. It never loses its human interest.

WHERE GERMS ARE NOT SUSPECTED

The peasant women and children are patient, pleasant, and shrewd merchants. Neither they nor their customers are bothered by such trifles as dust or germs; for the only booths of this bazaar are baskets and a few feet of earth along the dusty dock or its approaches. Here round loaves of dusky bread, 18 to 24 inches in diameter, are displayed, that they may later be gathered to the bosoms of hungry passengers and borne to their cabins. Lucky is the soldier who can pillow his head upon one of these loaves by night and munch upon it by day.

The idea of Russia's plenty is visualized along the river. Upstream ships are laden within and without with great hampers of fruit, carefully sewn beneath cloth covers. At some small ports there are literally thousands of watermelons on display. Small fruits are abundant. Some things are even cheap at places, as a watermelon for 10 or 15 cents and a loaf of bread for about the same.

Much of the fresh produce must go to

waste. The passengers on the boats do their utmost to prevent that undesirable fate for edibles, for they seem to be always eating, eating, eating. I cannot recall a single stroll around the deck, at any hour of day or night, when I did not see somebody eating and drinking. The overcrowded peasants on the deck below and the saloon passengers above are alike in this, that they are continually producing from their stores some sort of food to be eaten with the ever-present tea.

Still, one need not always study his fellow-passengers. There is the scenery of the shore, which, further down, includes the villages of the various Tatar tribes, with their round houses that look like haystacks; and far reaches of rolling meadow land and wheat fields; and hills and forests, and sand-dunes and towns and cities, with the wild ducks and geese flying between.

AN ENDLESS PROCESSION OF RIVER CRAFT

Then there is the incessant procession of boat life; 2,000 steamships regularly ply upon the Volga. Big barges, in groups of five or six, with half a dozen small boats clustered like barnacles behind, are towed by side-wheel tugs. Fishing craft, manned by Karmacks and other natives, glide by or are passed at anchor. From the shore comes the sound of church bells, made musical by traveling over the water.

Sunsets of surpassing loveliness, and sunrises which few Russian passengers see, cast a spell of peace over one's spirit, and the war seems for the moment distant and unreal. It is difficult to realize that upon every incident of the trip is stamped the grim seal of Mars. Every soldier on the decks; all the man-work done by women; each scramble for food; the almost total absence of pleasure-seekers from these passenger steamers at the height of the Russian travel season; the partings by the way; the munition factories on the river banks; the driving of all passengers indoors when the ship passes under the great railway bridge across the Volga—all these spell the life and death conflict, internal and with a foreign foe, which Russia is waging.

As the reader has perceived, I have been endeavoring to portray enough characteristic incidents of a large and representative section of Russia to make clear something of the condition of the place and the people.

Russia is huge and inchoate and potential. Her people are at present adrift in their minds, as so many of them are adrift physically. They are in the grip of a great negation; the old order of autocracy has been cast off forever. But the great essentials and affirmations of democracy have not yet taken hold of this conglomerate and simple-minded mass of children. Nevertheless, as surely as the turbid and tortuous Volga finds the shining sea, so surely will Russia one day emerge from her muddled and wavering drifting into the clear calm of a great and purposeful and brotherly national life.